

TWO-WAY DIGGER ON RIGHT WING

Sabourin Major New Addition for Seals

By HANK MASLER

Gary Sabourin is sick and tired of being traded. It requires a whole new orientation and it's hard on the family. If he's traded again, he'll give serious thought to retirement.

But it's all part of the game, he admits, and as long as he had to be dealt again, he's glad it was to the California Seals.

Sabourin was traded during the off season to his fourth professional organization, but he's excited about playing for the Seals and is hoping for a good season and a shot at the playoffs.

Formerly New York Ranger property, Sabourin was dealt to the St. Louis Blues in 1967 before playing a game for the New York parent club. Seven years later he was sent to the Toronto Maple Leafs, and now, one year later, he's with the Seals.

"The move here has to be looked at positively," he says. "I hated to move, but I wasn't used in Toronto."

Sabourin was used sparingly last year after coming off a knee operation to remove cartilage. The knee wasn't properly healed by training camp, and with seven right wingers in Toronto, Sabourin was dressed for only two-thirds of the Leaf games in 1974-75. He played regularly in only 15.

So the 180-pound winger was sent to the Seals, a team in desperate need of right wingers.

Now with the damaged knee back in good shape, Sabourin has been hustling and skating well. "I've still got a slight amount of fluid on it, but not so much that it bothers me," he says. "It won't hinder my skating at all."

Back to full strength, Sabourin is hoping to return to the form that saw him score 116 goals in five seasons with St. Louis.

But he isn't concerned about his scoring punch; he's just interested in contributing to a contender. "If we can make the playoffs and if I can contribute, I'll be happy," he says. "I wasn't brought here to lead the club in scoring, but I can help in many other ways."



VETERAN RIGHT WINGER GARY SABOURIN
... a healthy knee and a healthy attitude

The help Sabourin can supply will come in the form of experience. The veteran will turn 32 years old in December, and his steady influence and intelligence on the ice should prove invaluable to the young Seals.

He believes that action speaks louder than words, and that leadership qualities are shown on the ice. "I consider myself a good, honest hockey player," he says, "and I'm not afraid to criticize myself."

Sabourin explains that he doesn't do too much cheer-leading, but that a good strong game will take care of any words he might have.

Of course, he says, "There are some things a veteran will notice and can impart on the younger players. If some of the younger guys are around and want to listen, I'll certainly try to help."

But there's nothing like experience to help a team move, or is there? Sabourin admits that inexperience may hurt the team during the early part of the year, but that could be overcome with hard work. "If we're not afraid to work, we'll be in

the running, and the experience will come by itself," he says.

With a bad knee and another trade behind him, Sabourin has settled down to play hockey. "I'm happy to be here," he says. "My family enjoys the Bay Area, and I'm hoping to help the Seals win a playoff berth."

Sabourin is interested in playing good hockey for the Seals, and there's no revenge or disappointment in his mind. "I'm going to try to play my best no matter where I am," he says. "Once I'm on the ice, I'm completely involved in the play. I owe it to myself and to the team to play the best I know how. Jobs are getting hard to get in hockey. It just makes me feel good to know that there are still teams in the league who think I can help."

Gary Sabourin is all business. He's here to contribute, and with a shortage of right wingers and veterans, he's most welcome. As far as he's concerned, the worry of trades and injuries will all be worthwhile if the team does well and he lends a helping hand.

